

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8264

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

CINCUSAREUR

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOSOUTH

USNMR SHAPE

UNCLAS ATHENS 2779

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, GR, TU

SUBJ: MINISTRY OF DEFENSE DENIES GREEK ISLANDS

CONSTITUTE THREAT AGAINST TURKEY

1. MINISTRY NATIONAL DEFENSE ISSUED FOLLOWING STATEMENT
APRIL 9 RELEVANT TO GREEK AEGEAN ISLANDS. "IN REPLY TO
A STATEMENT MADE BY THE SPOKESMAN OF THE TURKISH FOREIGN
MINISTRY AND SIMILAR REPORTS CARRIED IN CERTAIN TURKISH
NEWSPAPERS, THE NATIONAL DEFENSE MINISTRY STATES THAT
NO GREEK ISLANDS HAS ANY POSSIBILITY WHATEVER OF
ATTACK AGAINST TURKISH TERRITORY. ANY ATTACK IS
PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE AND INCONCEIVABLE. GREECE
HAS ONLY THE STRENGTH AND WILL TO DEFEND EFFECTIVELY ANY
PART OF HER CONTINENTAL OR ISLAND TERRITORY THAT MIGHT
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COME UNDER ATTACK. CONSEQUENTLY ANY RUMOR TO THE

CONTRARY, IF NOT SUSPICIOUS, IS SURELY OUTSIDE THE
BOUNDS OF REALITY."

2. STATEMENT WAS CITED AS "RESPONSE TO RECENT STATEMENT
OF TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND TURKISH PRESS". IN THAT CONNECTION,
GREEK PRESS APRIL 9 CARRIED DECLARATION OF A TURKISH FOREIGN
MINISTRY OFFICIAL (AKBIL) WHO DENIED THAT TURKISH AIRCRAFT HAD
VIOLATED GREEK AIRSPACE AND ADDITIONALLY ACCUSED GREECE OF
"FORTIFYING ITS ISLANDS OFF THE TURKISH COAST" WITH THE AIM
OF PREPARING AN ATTACK AGAINST TURKEY. GREEK PRESS HAS ALSO
REFERRED TO RECENT ARTICLE IN TURKISH JOURNAL "HURRIYET"
WHICH CITED "OFFICIAL TURKISH CIRCLES IN ANKARA" AS CLAIMING
THAT "EVER SINCE CARAMANLIS RETURNED TO POWER, GREECE HAS
EMBARKED ON AN OFFENSIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TURKEY".

3. OTHER RECENT TURKISH STATEMENTS (AS REPORTED IN GREEK PRESS)
HAVE ALSO SERVED TO PROVOKE BOTH PUBLIC OPINION AND OFFICIAL
SENSITIVITIES HERE. TURKISH DEFENSE MINISTER MELEN IS QUOTED
AS STATING THAT RECENT TURKISH FLIGHTS WERE OVER "AUTHORIZED
AREAS" AND THAT ITS AIRCRAFT WILL CONTINUE EXERCISING "ITS
RIGHTS" OVER THE AEGEAN. SIMILARLY, APRIL 8 PRESS HERE CARRIED
SUMMARY OF PLATFORM STATEMENT OF NEW DEMIREL GOVERNMENT IN
WHICH HE REPORTEDLY STATED HIS "DISAPPROVAL OF GREEK POLICY
OF FORTIFYING ITS AEGEAN ISLANDS" AND ALSO EXPRESSED
"DISAGREEMENT" WITH ANY GREEK DECISION EXTENDING ITS TERRITORIAL
WATERS TO 12 MILES. FINALLY, STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO TURKISH
FOREIGN MINISTER WERE PUBLISHED HERE OVER PAST WEEKEND WHICH
DECLARED AN INTENTION ON PART OF GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH
MATTER OF "FORTIFICATIONS OF GREEK ISLANDS".
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